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PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIVISION

CONTACTS WITH THE MEDIA ON THURSDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 1982

Media Representative	Agency Contact	Query and Comment
Daniel Gilmore UPI		During testimony this morning at Joint Congressional Committee on Helsinki accords, Senator D'Amato asked writer Claire Sterling whether CIA had contacted her to discuss evidence she had indicating Bulgarian/Soviet involvement in Pope assault. When told no, D'Amato and Senator Leahy expressed concern that such a contact had not been initiated. Why didn't CIA contact Sterling? COMMENT: Willing to listen to anyone who wants to provide information.
Alfonso Chardy MIAMI HERALD		Does CIA wish to comment on HPSCI report criticizing intelligence reporting on Central America? COMMENT: No.
Anne Lerouz EFE News Agency, Spain		Any comment on TASS allegation that CIA composed the NBC story charging USSR was involved in the assassination attempt against the Pope? COMMENT: The usual Soviet propaganda.
Roger Zimmer LUGGAGE AND TRAVELWARE Magazine		Would like to do a special feature on unique travel cases that agents carry; can CIA help? COMMENT: No.
Walter Friedenberg Scripps-Howard Newspapers		Requests information on Haddad's Christian Militia and the Phalange in Lebanon -- troop strength, equipment, sources of military aid, etc. COMMENT: Referred to Defense.

Charles E. Wilson.

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PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIVISION

CONTACTS WITH THE MEDIA ON FRIDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 1982

Media Representative	Agency Contact	Query and Comment
Gregory Stec RKO Radio Network		Requests interview with DCI or DDCI. COMMENT: Unable to arrange; will add name to list. 25X1
Larry Elkin AP		Any comment on charge by Senator D'Amato that CIA ignored information he provided on KGB involvement in the attempt to assassinate the Pope? COMMENT: No.
Kristy Hamilton World Press Institute		Requests briefing on Yellow Rain from CIA analyst [redacted] COMMENT: Unable to arrange; referred to State. 25X1
Chris Hanson COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW		Can CIA cite any examples of cases in which the USSR has employed homosexuality as a means of recruiting U.S. Government employees as spies? COMMENT: Referred to FBI.
Brad Schreiber Writer		Does CIA maintain psychiatric safehouses for employees who have tried to defect? COMMENT: No.
Medard Gabel ROGERS DAILY NEWS		Asks questions concerning CIA publications releasable to the public. COMMENT: Answered.
Michael Boettcher Cable News Network		Requests information on Soviet oil production. COMMENT: Provided.
Roger Niles PARADE Magazine		What is the U.S. dollar value of British weapons sold to Argentina? COMMENT: Referred to DOD.
Warren Richey CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR		Where do arms flowing into North Yemen originate? COMMENT: Much info on this subject already in public domain.

[redacted]
Charles E. Wilson

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ON PAGE 38

TIME
27 SEPTEMBER 1982

TERRORISM

Tracking Agca

Was Moscow involved?

It was on May 13, 1981, that a hand rose from a sea of smiling faces in St. Peter's Square and fired several shots at Pope John Paul II. After a quick trial by Italian authorities, Mehmet Ali Agca, 23, a self-described "international terrorist," disappeared behind bars to serve a life sentence, leaving a stream of questions unanswered: Who was he? Why had he done it? Had he acted alone or on someone else's orders? In an hourlong special report that will be broadcast this week, an NBC News team headed by Correspondent Marvin Kalb follows the trail of suspicion and surmise all the way to the Kremlin. Kalb says he has uncovered "a great deal of evidence, some of it, to be sure, circumstantial, linking the attempted murder in St. Peter's Square to the political and diplomatic needs of Red Square."

The report traces Agca's terrorist roots back to his native Turkey, where he had rubbed shoulders with extremists of both right and left. In July 1979 Agca pleaded guilty to the murder of moderate Turkish Journalist Abdi Ipekci; he escaped from prison five months later. In July 1980 Agca appeared in Sofia, Bulgaria. According to NBC, he spent seven weeks in the best hotels there, received a counterfeit Turkish passport and mingled with members of the Turkish Mafia, which has long run a thriving drugs-for-guns trade with the cooperation of Bulgaria's hard-line Communist regime. It was in Bulgaria, Kalb speculates, that the Soviets may have indirectly recruited the young killer. Kalb reasons that Agca could not have operated freely in Sofia without the complicity of the Bulgarian secret service—and, by extension, the Soviet KGB, which controls it.

Had it stopped there, Kalb's case would not have added much to what other investigators, notably Journalist Claire Sterling, have already revealed. Where

NBC does break new ground is in attributing a precise motive to Moscow. Citing unnamed Vatican sources, Kalb reports that the Pope sent a special envoy to the Kremlin in August 1980, while Poland was in the grip of a nationwide strike. The envoy allegedly gave Soviet Leader Leonid Brezhnev a handwritten letter from the Pope, who threatened to "lay down the crown of St. Peter" and return home to join the resistance if the Soviets moved against Poland. After a series of diplomatic shuttles between Moscow, Warsaw and Rome, says NBC, the papal envoy persuaded the Soviets to acquiesce in the Gdansk agreement that gave birth to Solidarity. Exasperated by the Pope's intervention and by his subsequent "plans to send millions of dollars to Solidarity," says Kalb, Brezhnev may have decided to get rid of "this meddlesome priest."

Intriguing though it is, NBC's scenario falls far short of hard proof. A Vatican spokesman denied knowledge of any papal letter to Brezhnev or secret diplomatic mission to Moscow. Although U.S. Senator Alfonse D'Amato last week accused CIA officials of dismissing information he gave them in October 1981 that the Kremlin was involved in the plot to kill the Pope, U.S. intelligence officials told TIME they had no evidence that the Pope was involved in either Solidarity's birth or funding.

Many observers familiar with the Polish events of 1980 doubt that the Pope would have engaged in shuttle diplomacy on Solidarity's behalf just when the head of the Polish church, the late Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski, was publicly calling on workers to scale down their demands. And even if such intercession did take place in August 1980, why should the Soviets try to kill the Pope nine months later, when Solidarity was already well established? Finally, if the Soviets were so concerned about papal intervention, why didn't that prevent them from ordering a Polish-executed crackdown last December? In attempting to answer the big question behind the attack on John Paul, NBC has raised dozens more.

The world

Senator convinced KGB was in on plot to kill Pope

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Alfonse M. D'Amato [R., N.Y.] said Thursday he was "convinced that the Soviet KGB had full knowledge of and at least tactically supported the plot to kill the Pope."

The senator's statement came at a hearing by the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe to review recent news reports into alleged Soviet bloc links with the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II in May, 1981.

Earlier this week an NBC broadcast said the Pope had sent a secret note to Soviet President Leonid I. Brezhnev, warning that he would abdicate and return to his native Poland if Soviet troops invaded the country to crush the Solidarity trade union movement.

D'AMATO TOLD the hearing, "I learned of the note during a trip to visit Pope John Paul last year, and discussed the significance of the secret communication with U.S. intelligence officials upon my return to the United States."

"Thus, I believe it is quite apparent that the Soviets would have liked to rid the Vatican of the Polish Pope," he said, adding that "many questions about the international terrorist network which sought to eliminate the Pope remain."

The Soviet news agency, Tass, on Wednesday denied any Soviet involvement in the alleged plot.

JOURNALIST CLAIRE Sterling testified that, based on an intensive investigation into the "hidden forces" behind Mehmet Ali Agca, the Turkish gunman convicted of the attack on the Pope, "it is fair to conclude that the Bulgarian secret service was running this operation."

"Beyond that point, it's up to all of you on the committee, to the public, to the authorities to prove whether and to what degree what was done by the Bulgarian secret service was done with the knowledge and consent of the KGB," she told the congressional panel.

Sterling, author of a Reader's Digest article dealing with the attack on the Pope, said:

"I think that anybody who is expert on the subject would agree that of all the Eastern European states, the Bulgarian communist regime is the most orthodox, pro-Moscow, the most inflexibly loyal to Moscow. And the Bulgarian secret service is the most tightly linked with and at the active service of Moscow."

REP. DON RITTER [R., Pa.] said there is still "great fear" among Western European governments of openly discussing the issue of Soviet bloc involvement with terrorist groups and the alleged plot against the Pope.

"We must ask the question: Who might be the next victim?" Ritter said.

17 September 1982

D'AMATO: CIA IGNORED INFO ON POPE PLOT

By NILES LATHAM, N.Y. Post Correspondent

WASHINGTON — Sen. Alfonse D'Amato accused the CIA of ignoring shocking information he gave them in October 1981 that the Soviet Union was involved in the plot to kill Pope John Paul II.

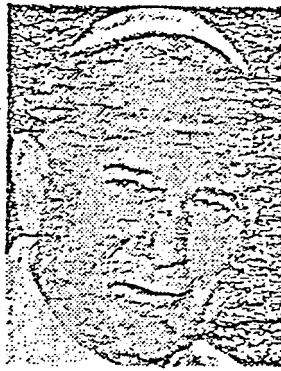
D'Amato, in an interview with The Post last night, said that he was told by senior Vatican officials and top Italian diplomats during a visit last year that there was evidence that the KGB was behind the Turkish terrorist who shot the Pope.

Immediately upon his return to the U.S., D'Amato said, he had an urgent meeting with CIA officials in which he relayed the information.

The interview was held on Oct. 19 in a top-secret conference room in the Capitol. The CIA's former legislative liaison director, Alan Ptak, and three unidentified agents attended.

But Ptak discounted the information and bluntly told D'Amato to keep quiet.

"The disturbing factor is that when I went to the CIA they indicated to me that my information was not correct and they exhibited



POPE JOHN PAUL
Target of KGB.

very little interest in it," he said.

"Then they advised me to be very, very low key," the New York Republican said.

Dale Peterson, a spokesman for the CIA, said last night he would have no comment on D'Amato's charge.

D'Amato said it was the firm belief of the Vatican and Italian po-

lice that the KGB was behind the plot.

The Vatican told the senator that the Polish Pope had threatened to wage a major campaign against the Soviet crackdown on Poland's Solidarity union movement.

It was believed that the KGB acted quickly to silence him, D'Amato said.

"But what astonished everyone I talked to is that the KGB apparently acted too quickly so that they left traces behind — something they don't normally do," he said.

"There were just too many coincidences," he added.

D'Amato identified the Vatican official he spoke with only as a "monsignor and friend," and said that to release his name could jeopardize his life.

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL
23 SEPTEMBER 1982

BY DANIEL F. GILMORE

WASHINGTON

Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y., told a joint congressional committee Thursday there is "compelling evidence" pointing to Soviet and Bulgarian complicity in the attempted assassination last year of Pope John Paul II.

D'Amato made the statement during a hearing of the Joint Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The commission, composed of six senators and six congressmen, met to hear testimony from witnesses, including Claire Sterling, an American foreign correspondent based in Rome for more than 30 years.

D'Amato, following a visit to Rome last year, reported to the CIA on his return that Vatican officials suspected Soviet involvement in the assassination attempt.

He said the commission was meeting "to consider the compelling evidence which points to complicity on the part of Bulgarian and Soviet security and intelligence forces in the attempted assassination."

Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, expressed concern that Ms. Sterling had not been questioned by the CIA and D'Amato said, "I'm shaken that you have not been approached by the intelligence agencies."

A CIA spokesman had no comment when asked why the agency had not talked to Ms. Sterling.

EXCERPT

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THE WASHINGTON TIMES
24 SEPTEMBER 1982

Hill panel probes allegations of Soviet tie in pope shooting

By John McKeelway
WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF

A Hill panel began collecting testimony yesterday linking the Soviet Union to the 1981 attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II.

The Helsinki Commission, made up of 12 members of Congress and formed after the Helsinki Accords of 1975, monitors violations of the agreement.

Author Claire Sterling, an expert in terrorist activities, continued to suggest that the Soviet Union, through the KGB and the secret service of Bulgaria, were the "hidden forces" behind the gunman, Mehmet Ali Agca.

Sterling recently wrote a Reader's Digest article tracing the path of Agca from his birthplace in Turkey to St. Peter's Square in Rome.

"In Italy, as nearly everywhere else in the West, governing leaders could hardly welcome hard evidence of Soviet Russia's complicity in a terrorist hit deliberately designed to outrage and shock the world," she told the commission. "The impact on international relations might be

shattering. The temptation to look the other way might prove irresistible again, as it has so frequently before."

Sterling, under questioning by Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y., said she has not been questioned by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) despite months of gathering information on the gunman.

"I find it shocking that you have not been approached by the intelligence community," D'Amato said.

D'Amato, meanwhile, revealed that he may have been the source for an NBC report earlier this week that the pope threatened to resign and return to Poland if Russia moved to crush the Solidarity movement. The threat was contained in a private letter the pope sent to Soviet President Leonid I. Brezhnev, an NBC spokesman said.

D'Amato remarked during the hearing that he knew the "monsignor" who carried the message. Later, outside the hearing room, he said he could not name the monsignor at this time.

The theory that Russia wanted to remove the pope because of his close

ties to Poland and the growing strength of Solidarity has been suggested by both Sterling and NBC. The Vatican, meanwhile, remains silent on whether or not the letter was sent by the pope. Polish authorities eventually clamped down on the Polish labor movement while the pope slowly recovered from his wounds.

D'Amato told the hearing, "I am convinced that the Soviet KGB had full knowledge of, and, at least tacitly, supported the plot to kill the pope." He said the pope's actions toward human rights movements in Poland "clearly annoyed officials in the Kremlin."

In a report to members of the commission, the staff said new evidence supports the claim that the assassin "did not act alone."

It said: "He is not a Muslim fanatic, or religious at all; he is not an active rightist or nationalist in Turkish terms; he is not stupid, ignorant, mentally unbalanced or a psychopath. Agca is an international terrorist, trained to kill, managed and financially supported by some 'organized' element."

WASHINGTON

Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y., said Thursday that Vatican officials told him they suspected Soviet Union complicity in the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II.

D'Amato said a recent Readers Digest article and a NBC documentary pointing to Soviet involvement "coincide very closely with information given me by Vatican officials during my visit to Rome in October of 1981."

In a four-paragraph statement, D'Amato said, "My own conversations with high level Vatican officials completely confirm these charges of Soviet complicity in the attempted assassination of the Pope.

"It is time the western world woke up to the hard fact that a great deal of evidence points to the conclusion that the Soviet Union was very likely the silent partner in one of the most dastardly acts of our time," he said.

D'Amato visited the Vatican during his trip to Italy October 5-13, 1981.

The Vatican official who provided the information, according to D'Amato, was involved in shuttle diplomacy between the Vatican and the Kremlin at the time Pope John Paul II sent his message to Leonid Brezhnev about Poland.

D'Amato said he relayed the information to the Central Intelligence Agency when he returned to the United States.